Interim order on life saving medicines

*600. DR. A. R. KIDWAI :
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY :

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Supreme Court has issued interim order asking the government to lay down the criteria to bring essential and life saving medicines under price control by 2nd May, 2003;

(b) if so, whether Government have considered the interim order of the Supreme Court;

(c) whether Government are set to explore all options to push through the policy of progressive decontrol ;

(d) if so, whether the Health Ministry and Law Ministry have been consulted on this issue; and

(e) if so, by what time the final decision in this regard is likely to be taken ?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SUKH DEV SINGH DHINDSA) : (a) to (e) The Supreme Court *vide* its order dated 10-3-2003 in Special Leave to Appeal (Civil) 3668/2003 has directed *inter alia*, to formulate appropriate criteria for ensuring essential and life saving drugs not to fall out of price control and further directed to review drugs which are essential and life saving in nature till 2nd May, 2003. The order of the Supreme Court and the relevant issues have been referred to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Legal Affairs.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Fall in rice production in comparison to wheat

4332. SHRI R. KAMARAJ : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1732 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 7th March, 2003 and state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the fall in production in the financial year 2002-2003 was expected to be sharp in the case of rice than wheat; and

(b) if so, the details of the steps taken by Government to supply required foodgrains for PDS schemes from the Central Pool ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) Yes Sir. The fall in production in the agriculture year (July-June) 2002-03 *vis-a-vis* 2001-02 is estimated to be higher in case of rice than in wheat which is reflected in the table below :—

(Production in million tonnes)

Crop	2002-03*	2001-02	% decline in 2002-03 over 2001-02
Rice	76.91	93.08	17.37
Wheat	70.26	71.81	2.16

*Third Advance Estimates dated 04-04-2003.

(b) Sufficient stocks of rice and wheat are available with the Government to meet the demands under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes. Department of Food & Public Distribution extends price support for the procurement of paddy and wheat through the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the State Governments and their agencies. All the foodgrains (wheat and paddy) conforming to the prescribed specifications offered for sale at specified centres are bought by the public procuring agencies. A wide network of purchase centres are opened throughout the country. In addition to encouraging decentralized procurement, the Government has also taken up procurement operations in some of non-traditional States to extend the benefits of Minimum Support Price (MSP) to the farmers. The producers have the option to sell their produce to the FCI/State Agencies at the support price, or in the open market, as is advantageous to them. As such, no targets are fixed for procurement of foodgrains.